

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

This listing of the claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1.-15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A mechanical pencil comprising a tubular body extending along a longitudinal axis between a rear end and a front end provided with an orifice, through which a lead is capable of emerging, and a lead-advancing mechanism arranged in the tubular body, said advancing mechanism comprising:

a longitudinally movable member having a forwardly oriented bearing surface and having a reservoir prolonged by a central duct allowing the passage of the leads one by one;

a chuck having a tubular portion connected to said movable member in order to allow the passage of a lead from the central duct toward a head of said chuck, wherein said chuck is capable of being clamped on the lead;

a clamping ring which is movable longitudinally with respect to said chuck and to the tubular body and which is designed to cooperate with the head of said chuck; and

an elastic element having a front end and a rear end, wherein the rear end bears against the bearing surface of said movable member, said elastic element being designed to be a single element which biases said clamping ring against the head of said chuck when said advancing mechanism is in a rest position,

a bush, movable longitudinally with respect to said chuck and the body, arranged between said clamping ring and the front end of said elastic element,

wherein said chuck is movable longitudinally with respect to said movable member over a defined stroke, [[and]]

wherein the body has a front stop designed to limit the forward displacement of the bush, and

wherein said chuck, said clamping ring and said bush move together toward the rear end when a user exerts an excessive pressure on the lead, said elastic element being the single element compressed during the movement toward the rear end for imparting a cushioning effect.

17. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 16, wherein the front stop is formed by a radially inner rim which cooperates with a peripheral portion of the front end of the bush.

18. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 16, wherein said elastic element is a helical compression spring.

19. (Previously Presented) mechanical pencil according to Claim 16, wherein the tubular portion of said chuck has, from its rear end, first and second radially outer rims, and wherein the front end of said movable member has an orifice, through which said chuck slides between the first and second rims, the said first and second rims being spaced apart longitudinally in order to limit this sliding of said chuck to a value equal to the defined stroke.

20. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 19, wherein the tubular portion of said chuck has a frustoconical portion extending from the first rim as far as the rear end of said chuck.

21. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 16, wherein the body has a rear stop designed to cooperate with a complementary stop of said movable member and to limit the rearward displacement of said movable member, the longitudinal distance between the front stop of the body and the rear stop being designed so that said clamping ring keeps said chuck clamped under the action of the bush when said advancing mechanism is in the rest position.

22. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 21, wherein the rear stop is formed by a radially inner rim of the body, the rim cooperating with a radially outer shoulder of said movable member.

23. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 16, wherein the body has an aperture extending longitudinally as far as a rear end, and wherein said movable member has a pin projecting into the aperture, the rear end of the aperture forming the rear stop.

24. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 16, wherein at least one elastically deformable compensation member is arranged between the front stop of the body and the bush or between the rear stop of the body and the complementary stop of said movable member.

25. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 24, wherein the compensation member comprises at least one tab elastically deformable in a longitudinal direction and produced in one piece with the body.

26. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to any of Claim 16, wherein the body has a rearward movement stop designed to limit the rearward displacement of said clamping ring from the rest position of said advancing mechanism to a value at most equal to the defined stroke of said chuck.

27. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 26, wherein the rearward movement stop is formed by at least one stud integral with the body and extending radially inwards between the bush and said movable member, the stud being designed to limit the rearward displacement of the bush.

28. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 26, wherein the rearward movement stop is formed by a radially inner rim of the body, the rim being designed to cooperate with a radially outer shoulder of said clamping ring.

29. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 16, wherein said chuck is capable of driving the lead forwards over a defined stroke from the rest position of said advancing mechanism.

30. (Previously Presented) The mechanical pencil according to Claim 16, wherein said elastic element is designed to exert on the bush a pressure of about 2 - 5 newtons when said advancing mechanism is in the rest position, and a pressure of about 5 - 10 newtons when said chuck has executed a rearward displacement substantially equal to the defined stroke.

31. (Currently Amended) A mechanical pencil comprising a tubular body extending along a longitudinal axis between a rear end and a front end provided with an orifice, through which a lead is capable of emerging, and a lead-advancing mechanism arranged in the tubular body, said advancing mechanism comprising:

a longitudinally movable member having a forwardly oriented bearing surface and having a reservoir prolonged by a central duct allowing the passage of the leads one by one;

a chuck having a tubular portion connected to said movable member in order to allow the passage of a lead from the central duct toward a head of said chuck, wherein said chuck is capable of being clamped on the lead;

a clamping ring which is movable longitudinally with respect to said chuck and to the tubular body and which is designed to cooperate with the head of said chuck; and

an elastic element having a front end and a rear end, wherein the rear end bears against the bearing surface of said movable member, said elastic element being designed to be a single element which biases said clamping ring against the head of said chuck when said advancing mechanism is in a rest position,

a bush, movable longitudinally with respect to said chuck and the body, arranged between said clamping ring and the front end of said elastic element,

wherein said chuck is movable longitudinally with respect to said movable member over a defined stroke, [[and]]

wherein the body has a front stop designed to limit the forward displacement of the bush, [[and]]

wherein the front stop is formed by a radially inner rim which cooperates with a peripheral portion of the front end of the bush, and

wherein said chuck, said clamping ring and said bush move together toward the rear end when a user exerts an excessive pressure on the lead, said elastic element being the single element compressed during the movement toward the rear end for imparting a cushioning effect.

32. (Currently Amended) A mechanical pencil comprising a tubular body extending along a longitudinal axis between a rear end and a front end provided with an orifice, through which a lead is capable of emerging, and a lead-advancing mechanism arranged in the tubular body, said advancing mechanism comprising:

a longitudinally movable member having a forwardly oriented bearing surface and having a reservoir prolonged by a central duct allowing the passage of the leads one by one;

a chuck having a tubular portion connected to said movable member in order to allow the passage of a lead from the central duct toward a head of said chuck, wherein said chuck is capable of being clamped on the lead;

a clamping ring which is movable longitudinally with respect to said chuck and to the tubular body and which is designed to cooperate with the head of said chuck; and

an elastic element having a front end and a rear end, wherein the rear end bears against the bearing surface of said movable member, said elastic element being designed to be a single element which biases said clamping ring against the head of said chuck when said advancing mechanism is in a rest position,

a bush, movable longitudinally with respect to said chuck and the body, arranged between said clamping ring and the front end of said elastic element,

wherein said chuck is movable longitudinally with respect to said movable member over a defined stroke, [[and]]

wherein the body has a front stop designed to limit the forward displacement of the bush, [[and]]

wherein said chuck, said clamping ring and said bush move together toward the rear end when a user exerts an excessive pressure on the lead, said elastic element being the single element compressed during the movement toward the rear end for imparting a cushioning effect, and

wherein said elastic element is a helical compression spring.